



Sep 10, 2013 11:59 CAT

Inspiring Awareness

There is no contesting the fact that the Discovery East Coast Radio Big Walk welcomes all kinds of people. While many participants enter the Big Walk to have fun, some people have personal reasons for doing so that are incredibly different to the majority of Big Walk participants. Jackie Hemming, a 69 year old woman who suffers from Multiple sclerosis (MS) is one such person, who despite her illness, is determined to defy the odds. Multiple Sclerosis is an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system and can result in severe health conditions such as a decrease in physical mobility. Hemming participated in the Discovery East Coast Radio Big Walk in 2012, where despite her illness she was able to complete 1.5 km of the race. After her experience last year, she attended this year's Big Walk with every intention of doing it, but ended up not walking the course and plans to do so next year. Despite opting not to walk this year, she still attended the race as a seated

spectator at the finish in the People's Park inside the Moses Mabhida Stadium.

The reason why being a part of this event is important to her, whether as a spectator or a walker, is because she is the founder of an initiative called WOW South Africa - Wear Orange Wednesday, and she views the Discovery East Coast Radio Big Walk as a means through which she can help to create awareness about multiple sclerosis on World MS day, which falls on Wednesday 29 May 2013, and more specifically about WOW. For the occasion, Hemming wore a bold orange t-shirt at the Big Walk with the words WOW printed on it. Her bright t-shirt also displayed some information about the WOW course, which is to increase awareness about multiple sclerosis. Hemming states that people who have this disease suffer tremendously and this is why it is important to raise awareness, as well as to try to raise funds to assist people who suffer from the disease and are unable to afford medication or any other basic care treatment. The WOW programme aims to persistently help people suffering from MS and who have no means to help themselves. Her aim is to attract awareness which will further attract donations, as every amount of money, no matter how large or small, can really help someone who desperately needs it.

Hemmings attended the Big Walk in hope that she will not only create awareness but also in the hope that she can motivate people to donate R5 to WOW as the organisation is currently cash strapped and encountering difficulties in providing assistance to people suffering from MS as many of them have been laid off from work and as a result, are no longer on medical insurance. Furthermore, many people with the disease are bedridden and need extra care such as nappies.

Hemmings' motto is to "stay strong" and she is very thankful for Johnie Horam, her caregiver and who her children have nicknamed "Saint John". Remarkably despite being ill herself, she is passionate and dedicated towards helping others who are suffering from the same condition.

Discovery information

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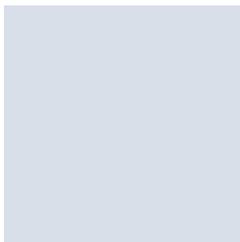
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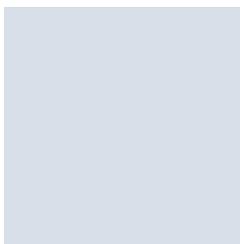
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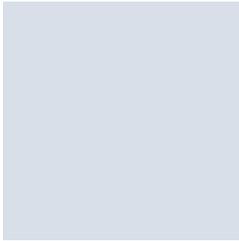
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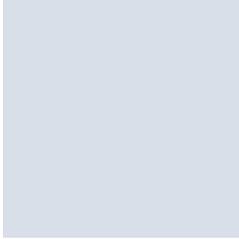
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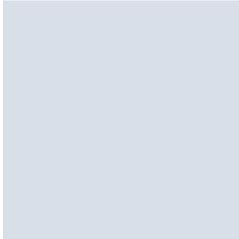
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